DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 103 037 JC 750 181

AUTHOR	Blai, Boris, Jr.
TITLE	"P" and "I" Grade Pattern, 1969-70 to 1974-75.
INSTITUTION	Harcum Junior Coll., Bryn Mawr, Pa.
REPORT NO	IRR-75-5
PUB DATE	Mar 75
NOTE	3p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Failure; *Grade Prediction; *Grading; *Junior Colleges; *Private Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Harcum Junior College; Pennsylvania

ABSTRACT

An analysis of "P" and "I" grades given at Harcum Junior College during the last five academic years reveals a long-term trend of substantial stability. The average percentage of "P" grades given was 3.7 percent (range= 2.8-5 percent). The average percentage of "I" grades given was 2.1 percent (range= 1-3 percent). Past studies suggest that both student and faculty characteristics contribute to this five-year pattern of comparative similarities. For the fall semester of 1974-75, the total numbers of "P" and "I" grades assigned in each academic department were as follows: Behavioral Science--14 "P's" and 11 "I's"; Business--25 "P's" and 12 "I's"; Humanities--5 "P's" and 32 "I's"; Science--72 "P's" and 7 "I's". Three years ago the author predicted that stabilized grading practices at Harcum would lead to a rising level of "lower" grades. His conclusion now is that such a "rising level" in "P" grades has occurred. (Author/DC)

ED103037

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HARCUM JUNIOR COLLEGE
BRYN MAWR, PENNA. 19010

Office of Research
IRR 75 - 5

(IV)

"F" & "I" Grade Pattern
1969-70 to 1974-75

1. Patterns of F and I grades reveal, in rough measure, levels of academic motivation and application to studies, as well as reflecting collateral 'outcomes' of personal-social adjustment problems among students. Of course, they also reflect the relative-stability of grading practices among faculty.

2. Analysis of 'deficiency' grades during these five academic years reveals the annual patterns noted in Table 1 which also evidences a long-term trend of substantial stability. Whether these similarities reflect levels of student stability (i.e., general levels of academic motivation, preparation, capacities, and application); faculty stability (i.e., a substantial majority having taught at Harcum throughout this period); or a combination of both, cannot be ascertained solely from these grading patterns. However, other inquiries over the years (IRRs 70-5, 72-2, 72-24, 72-31, 73-34) rather consistently suggest that both student and faculty characteristics contribute to this 5-year pattern of comparative similarities.

Table 1: - F & I Grades

	69-70	71-72	72-73	73-74	74-75	Average	Range
F =	5%	3%	2.8%	3.5%	4%	3.7%	2.2%
I =	2%	2.4%	3%	1%	2.2%	2.1%	2%

3. For the Fall semester of 1974-75, the total F & I grades assigned, by academic departments, are summarized in Table 2, below.

Table 2: - F & I Grades Assigned

	F's	I's
Behavioral Science	14	11
Business	25	12
Humanities	5	32
Science	72	7

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4. Three years ago (January 1972) the following observations were made in IRR 72-5, "Trends" in 'Lower' Grades (Fall 1965 to Fall 1971):

> " 6. Keener competition for freshman admissions has been on the increase in recent-past years; particularly for 2-year private, independent colleges. This has been occasioned by at least two major changes in freshman college admissions: (1) many 4-year colleges have lowered their entrance requirements, and (2) the rapid proliferation of tax-supported (low tuition) community colleges during a period of general economic retrenchment.
>
> 7. The long-range effects of these changes is virtually inevitable: greater numbers of students with modest high school academic records matriculate in these 'competing institutions. As a consequence, there are fewer of such students (due to a prospective 8-year period, until academic 1980, during which a lowered birthrate could have a depressant effect on college admissions.) This, in turn, is reflected in a reduced number available to accept invitations to attend Harcum. Paralleling these significant shifts, and assuming continued, stabilized grading practices at Harcum, it is anticipated that a rising level of "lower" grades will be somewhat characteristic of the immediate years ahead." (underlining supplied)

5. The facts documented in Table 1, above, do reveal such "a rising level" in F grades. Will it continue?

Boris Blai, Jr. Ed. D.
Director, Institutional Research

March 1975

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